(b) if so,, what are the details thereof and the reasons of increase in visa fee;

(c) what is the amount of additional income that is likely to be derived as a result thereof;

(d) whether Government are aware of its negative impact on inflow of tourists to India;

(e) whether there have been protests especially in Malaysia and Singapore against this hike;

(f) if so, what steps Government are taking in this regard; and

(g) whether Government propose to reconsider its decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Visa fee which prior to November, 91 was different for different nationalities and different for single double|triple|multiple entries have been now rationalised, it now depends upon duration of its validity. Reasons for increase in visa fee are:

(i)In 1990 the visa regime was liberalised and the duration of visa was extended upon 5 years but the visa fee was not appropriately increased.

(ii) The recent devaluation of Indian rupee made it imparative to revise the visa fee upwards.

(iii) Indian visa fee was reduced unilaterally in favour of nationals of UK; USA; FRG; France; Spain; Italy and Netherlands. But these countries did not reciprocate to our action.

(iv) Increasing local cost of running consular and visa services at Missions|Posts abroad.

(v) Mobilising funds or proper staffing and modernisation of the Consular Section in our Mission abroad, for further improving the quality of services.

(c) Rs. 100 crore (approximately) over a year.

(d) and (e) The upward revision of visa fee is not likely to materially affect the inflow of tourists. Tourists are not attracted so much by low visa fee as by other conditions facilitating tourism such as peace and tranquility, tourist infracture expeditious services etc. As a matter of fact visa fees are a very small fraction of the total expenses incurred by a tourist. However there have been some representations against the increase in visa fees.

(f) and (g) The Government policy in the matter is constantly kept under review.

Import of Cotton

273. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal with the Central Government to import cotton;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) what is the quantity and value of cotton proposed to be imported; and

(d) what is the coal foreing exchange commitment involved therein?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Cost of production of coal

274. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) what is the cost of production of coal in different collierjes in the country;